

DUXBURY CLIPPER



Memories of Yesterday



Born in the house on the Powder Point farm of Ezra Weston I. were his son Ezra Weston II and his grandsons, Gershom Bradford and Alden Bradford Weston. The farm of Ezra Weston I, who owned half of Duxbury, included 100 acres.

From 1820-42 Ezra Weston II was the biggest shipowner in the U. S., as Daniel Webster said in his speech at Saratoga during the Harrison campaign of 1840. He not only built his own vessels, but controlled nearly all the branches of business connected with shipbuilding and ownership of vessels.

He was president of the Duxbury Bank from its incorporation in 1833 until 1836, when his son Gershom Bradford Weston succeeded him. Gershom was president until 1842, when the bank failed as a result of the decline of shipbuilding in Duxbury. Pres. Abraham Lincoln asked Gershom to be the U. S. Minister to Ausatria, but he declined because of the small salary (\$12,000). Odd, considering the value of the dollar then. Gershom was a temperance man interested in the Duxbury Martha Washington Relief Society, founded in 1842. Its aim was the promotion of charity and temperance.

"Aunt Reeny" Brewster used to say the initials on the weather-vane on top of the flagstaff on Powder Point stood for "Ezra Weston's New Ship." Others felt the initials stood for East, West, North and South. Every community has its conservatives. . .

The first vessel to carry the U. S. Flag into the Black Sea through the Dardanelles and Sea of Marmora under a "Firman" issued by the Sultan of Turkey in 1830, was the brig Smyna, built in Duxbury in 1825 by Ezra Weston. It was a 160-ton vessel.

The business of E. Weston, E. Weston & Son, Ezra Weston and E. Weston and Sons, of Duxbury and Boston, flourished for about a century.

The first shipyard of E. Weston & Son was at Harden Hill and was known as the "Navy Yard" because of the large vessels built there. They later established one of the best ship-building plants in Massachusetts, consisting of a shipyard of ten acres and a wharf on Bluefish River and a ropewalk a quarter of a mile in length, a spar yard and a sail loft on their 100-acre farm on Powder Point, as well as a wharf with five large buildings on their water front on Duxbury Bay. The Weston firms brought their own timber and lumber from Haverhill and Bangor in their own schooners, or from Bridgeport and Middleboro with their own ox or horse teams, and their supplies from Boston in their own packets.